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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2016

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/463/Add.2)*]

71/224. Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the principles and commitments enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] the principles embodied in the Declaration of Barbados,[2] the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,[4] the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),[5] the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[6] the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[7] the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,[8] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development[9] and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[10] as well as other relevant declarations and international instruments,

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[6] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[7] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[8] Resolution 69/15, annex.

[9] Resolution 69/313, annex.

[10] Resolution 70/1.

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Welcoming the Paris Agreement[11] and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[12] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Recalling the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,[13] and looking forward to the convening and the result of the fifth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Cancún, Mexico, from 22 to 26 May 2017,

Recalling also the Declaration and review document adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-second special session,[14]

Taking into account all its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 54/225 of 22 December 1999, 55/203 of 20 December 2000, 57/261 of 20 December 2002, 59/230 of 22 December 2004, 61/197 of 20 December 2006, 63/214 of 19 December 2008, 65/155 of 20 December 2010, 67/205 of 21 December 2012 and 69/216 of 19 December 2014,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[15]

Recalling also the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, signed at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 24 March 1983,[16] and the protocols thereto, which contain the definition of the wider Caribbean region of which the Caribbean Sea is part,

Reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,[17] which provides the legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizing its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

Recalling the Convention on Biological Diversity[18] and other biodiversity-related conventions, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora[19] and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,[20]

Emphasizing the importance of national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector as recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in chapter 17 of Agenda 21,[21]

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[11] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[13] Resolution 69/283, annexes I and II.

[14] Resolution S-22/2, annex.

[15] Resolution 60/1.

[16] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1506, No. 25974.

[17] Ibid., vol. 1833, No. 31363.

[18] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[19] Ibid., vol. 993, No. 14537.

[20] Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.

[21] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

Recalling the relevant work done by the International Maritime Organization,

Considering that the Caribbean Sea area includes a large number of States, countries and territories, most of which are developing countries and small island developing States that are ecologically fragile and socially and economically vulnerable and are also affected, inter alia, by their limited capacity, narrow resource base, need for financial resources, high levels of poverty and the resulting social problems, and the challenges and opportunities of globalization and trade liberalization,

Recognizing that the Caribbean Sea has unique biodiversity and highly fragile ecosystems,

Recognizing also that the Caribbean has been shown to be the most tourism-dependent region in the world relative to its size,

Noting that the Caribbean Sea, when compared with all other large marine ecosystems, is surrounded by the largest number of countries in the world,

Emphasizing that the Caribbean countries have a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and associated phenomena, such as the rise in sea level, the El Niño phenomenon and the potential increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters caused by hurricanes, floods and droughts, and that they are also subject to natural disasters, such as those caused by volcanoes, tsunamis and earthquakes, which increase their sustainable development challenges,

Bearing in mind the heavy reliance of most of the Caribbean economies on their coastal areas, as well as on the marine environment in general, to achieve their sustainable development needs and goals,

Acknowledging that the intensive use of the Caribbean Sea for maritime transport, as well as the considerable number and interlocking character of the maritime areas under national jurisdiction where Caribbean countries exercise their rights and duties under international law, present a challenge for the effective management of resources,

Noting the problem of marine pollution caused, inter alia, by land-based sources and the continuing threat of pollution from ship-generated waste and sewage, as well as from the accidental release of hazardous and noxious substances in the Caribbean Sea area,

Taking note of the relevant resolutions of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the safe transport of radioactive materials,

Mindful of the diversity of and dynamic interaction and competition among socioeconomic activities for the use of the coastal areas and the marine environment and their resources,

Mindful also of the efforts of the Caribbean countries to address in a more holistic manner the sectoral issues relating to the management of the wider Caribbean Sea region and, in so doing, to promote the integrated management of the wider Caribbean Sea region in the context of sustainable development, through a regional cooperative effort among Caribbean countries,

Noting the significant progress made on regional ocean governance through the formulation of the strategic action programme of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem project, endorsed by ministers in 21 countries of the region,

Welcoming the continued efforts of the States members and associate members of the Association of Caribbean States to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, and recognizing in this regard the firm commitment by Heads of State and Government of the Association to take the steps necessary to ensure the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, without prejudice to relevant international law,

Recalling the creation by the Association of Caribbean States of the Caribbean Sea Commission, and welcoming its ongoing work and its contribution to the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea,

Cognizant of the importance of the Caribbean Sea to present and future generations and to the heritage and the continuing economic well-being and sustenance of people living in the area and of the urgent need for the countries of the region to take appropriate steps for its preservation and protection, with the support of the international community,

1. *Recognizes* that the Caribbean Sea is an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including the consideration of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to international law;

2. *Notes* the efforts of the Caribbean States and the work undertaken by the Caribbean Sea Commission of the Association of Caribbean States, including the development of their concept of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, and invites the international community to support such efforts;

3. *Welcomes* the plan of action adopted by the Caribbean Sea Commission, including its scientific and technical components and its governance and outreach components, and invites the international community and the United Nations system to enhance their support, including financial, technical and capacity-building assistance, as appropriate, to Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to implement the plan of action;

4. *Also welcomes* the resources provided by some donors to support the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission, and invites the international community to continue and to enhance its support, as appropriate, to the Commission, including through the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technical support, the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and the sharing of experience in the areas of work of the Commission;

5. *Further welcomes* the planned launch of a databank at the end of 2016 by the Caribbean Sea Commission which aims to improve the management of the specific emerging critical issues related to the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea through the sharing of management experiences and project resource data, including, but not limited to, the prediction, monitoring and management of sargassum seaweed inundation faced by the Caribbean;

6. *Welcomes* the convening of the seventh summit of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Cuba on 4 June 2016, and takes note of the Havana Declaration, entitled "United for a sustainable Caribbean",[22] and the Plan of Action for 2016–2018,[23] which constitute fundamental instruments for promoting the preservation and sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea;

7. *Recognizes* the efforts of Caribbean countries to create conditions leading to sustainable development aimed at combating poverty and inequality, and in this regard notes with interest the initiatives of the Association of Caribbean States in the focal areas of sustainable tourism, trade, transport and natural disasters;

8. *Calls upon* the United Nations system and the international community to assist Caribbean countries and their regional organizations, as appropriate, in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and pollution from the illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, in violation of relevant international rules and standards, as well as pollution from land-based activities;

9. *Invites* the Association of Caribbean States to submit to the Secretary-General a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventy-third session;

10. *Calls upon* all States to become parties to the relevant international agreements to enhance maritime safety and to promote the protection of the marine environment of the Caribbean Sea from pollution, damage and degradation from ships and ship-generated waste;

11. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the Special Area designation for the wider Caribbean region under annex V to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto,[24] which entered into force in May 2011;

12. *Supports* the efforts of Caribbean countries to implement sustainable fisheries management programmes and to meet the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;

13. *Calls upon* States, taking into consideration the Convention on Biological Diversity,[18] to develop national, regional and international programmes to halt the loss of marine biodiversity in the Caribbean Sea, in particular fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves;

14. *Notes with deep concern* that invasive alien species, such as *Pterois miles* and *P. volitans*, known as lionfish, constitute an emerging threat to biodiversity in the wider Caribbean region, and urges the United Nations system and the international community to continue to provide assistance and support in addressing this issue in the region;

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[22] A/70/996, annex I.

[23] Ibid., annex II.

[24] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1340, No. 22484.

15. *Also notes with deep concern* the sargassum seaweed influx and its negative impact on the people, the territory and the economy of the Caribbean, as well as the deterioration of the coral reefs;

16. *Invites* Member States and intergovernmental organizations of the United Nations system to continue their efforts to assist Caribbean countries in becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols concerning the management, protection and sustainable utilization of Caribbean Sea resources and in implementing those conventions and protocols effectively;

17. *Calls upon* the international community, the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions, and invites the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, to actively support the national and regional activities of the Caribbean States for the promotion of the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources;

18. *Expresses deep concern* about the severe destruction and devastation caused to several countries by heightened hurricane activity in the wider Caribbean region in recent years;

19. *Notes with appreciation* the ongoing activities of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and invites Member States and other partners to support early warning systems in the region;

20. *Urges* the United Nations system and the international community to continue to provide aid and assistance to the countries of the Caribbean region in the implementation of their long-term programmes of disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, management, relief and recovery, on the basis of their development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction into a comprehensive approach to sustainable development;

21. *Acknowledges* the pivotal role of the Association of Caribbean States in regional dialogue and in the consolidation of a wider Caribbean cooperation zone in the field of disaster risk reduction, as well as the importance of the international community in deepening existing cooperation and consolidating new initiatives with that regional mechanism in the context of the outcomes of the High-level Conference on Disaster Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Saint-Marc, Haiti, from 14 to 16 November 2007, and the plan of action approved by the Ministerial Council of the Association upon the recommendation of the Conference;

22. *Invites* Member States, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to consider training programmes for the development of a human resources capacity at different levels and to develop research aimed at enhancing the food security of Caribbean countries, as well as the sustainable management of renewable marine and coastal resources;

23. *Calls upon* Member States to improve, as a matter of priority, their emergency response capabilities and the containment of environmental damage, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, in the event of natural disasters or an accident or incident relating to maritime navigation;

24. *Encourages* the international community and the United Nations system, in line with their programming priorities, to support initiatives aimed at addressing

mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in the wider Caribbean region included in the Plan of Action for 2016–2018;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, under the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" of the item entitled "Sustainable development", on the implementation of the present resolution, emphasizing the three dimensions of sustainable development, including a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such, without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations, unless otherwise agreed.

66th plenary meeting
21 December 2016